

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 SEOUL 04874 090943Z
ACTION EA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1537

S E C R E T SEOUL 4874

STADIS//////////

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, KS
SUBJECT: F-16'S FOR KOREA

REF: STATE 144854

1. EMBASSY IS NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR ON EXACT MEANING OF AGREED DECISION REACHED BY SECRETARIES BROWN AND VANCE ON JUNE 5 ON THE PENDING ROK REQUEST FOR AN LOA COVERING 60 F-16 AIRCRAFT. WE ASSUME THAT THE FINAL SENTENCE OF PARA 1 REFTEL, WHICH STATES THAT WE WILL CONSIDER THE REQUEST FOR AN LOA AGAIN AT A LATER DATE, IS NOT INTENDED TO UNDERMINE THE FIRMNESS OF THE AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE TO THE SUPPLY OF F-16 AIRCRAFT, BUT IS DESIGNED TO COVER THE REQUIREMENT TO HAVE FORMAL PRESENTIAL APPROVAL PRIOR TO CONGRESSIONAL SUBMISSION. IF THIS ASSUMPTION IS CORRECT, THEN THE DECISION TAKEN ON JUNE 5 CONTAINS NOTHING NEW INSOFAR AS ROKG PERCEPTIONS ARE CONCERNED. ROKG CURRENTLY IS AWARE OF SECRETARY BROWN'S AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE TO THE PROVISION OF F-16'S AT THE 10TH SCM AND ALSO THAT THE TIMING FOR THE APPROVAL OF AN LOA IMPLEMENTING THIS AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE WILL BE DELAYED. IF THE ASSUMPTIONS WE HAVE MADE IN THIS PARA REGARDING THE FINAL SENTENCE OF PARA 1 REFTEL ARE INCORRECT, WE WOULD APPRECIATE FURTHER EXPLANATION AS TO WHAT IS INTENDED.

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2. THE EMBASSY SEES LITTLE ADVANTAGE TO CONVEYING THIS DECISION TO THE KOREANS "WELL BEFORE THE SCM". SINCE IT DOES NOT PROVIDE ANYTHING BEYOND THAT WHICH IS ALREADY ASSUMED, WE DO NOT BELIEVE IT WOULD DETER THE KOREANS FROM RAISING THIS ISSUE AT THE SCM. SINCE IN

ALL LIKELIHOOD F-16'S WILL BE RAISED AT THE SCM IT WOULD SEEM MORE APPROPRIATE TO RETAIN THE POSITION FOR USE IN RESPONSE TO KOREAN INQUIRY.

3. IN ADDITION, EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE ADDITIONAL CLARIFICATION OF WHAT IS MEANT BY "A LATER DATE". WE ASSUME THIS MEANS IN THE FY 79 TIME FRAME.

4. FURTHER, BEFORE APPRACHING THE ROK, EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE ESTIMATE OF THE IMPACT THIS COURSE OF ACTION IS LIKELY TO HAVE ON PRICING AND DELIVERY DATE OF THE F-16. WILL IT STILL BE POSSIBLE TO HOLD TO PRICE ESTIMATES AND DELIVERY DATE (1981) OR WILL THE DELAY RESULT IN AN INCREASE COST TO THE ROK.

5. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE GUIDANCE ON QUESTIONS LISTED ASAP.
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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** STADIS

*** Current Classification *** SECRET

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